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Civilian Personnel
MERIT PROMOTION AND PLACEMENT PLAN

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INFORMATION

1-1. PURPOSE. To establish written procedures for the Merit Promotion and Placement Plan at Fort Polk, Louisiana, in compliance with the merit system requirements of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Department of the Army (DA). This regulation establishes policies and procedures for all inservice placement actions ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory guidance.

1-2. APPLICABILITY. The provisions of this regulation apply to all competitive service positions serviced by the Directorate of Civilian Personnel, Fort Polk, Louisiana. Certain programs and placement actions, addressed in Chapter 2, may take precedence in filling position vacancies through merit promotion. Further, management may also exercise its right to select from other appropriate sources, such as reemployment priority lists, individuals with disabilities, Veteran Readjustment Act eligibles, other noncompetitive appointment eligibles, or from among those within reach on appropriate OPM certificates.

1-3. POLICY. It is the policy of this installation to ensure that consideration for placement, evaluation, and selection for all competitive service positions is made on the basis of merit and fitness without regard to political, religious, labor organization affiliation or nonaffiliation; race; color; sex; marital status; national origin; nondisqualifying physical handicap; age; or any other basis of bias or favoritism. This installation will:

- a. Afford employees the opportunity to compete fairly and impartially for promotion.

- b. Refrain from actions based upon personal relationship, favoritism, patronage, or any other nonmerit factors.

- c. Prevent management officials or employees from advocating their relatives (or the relative of an official higher in the chain of command) for employment, placement, promotion, or advancement.

- d. Strive to ensure that recruitment efforts for targeted under-represented occupations reach potential employment sources, including qualified individuals with disabilities, minorities, and female applicants.

1-4. REGULATIONS OF HIGHER AUTHORITIES. Where this regulation does not address certain aspects of the Merit Promotion and

Placement Plan, the provisions in regulations of higher authorities will apply. Where conflict exists between this regulation and regulations of higher authority, the regulations of higher authority will prevail.

1-5. DEFINITIONS.

a. Agency. Any department or independent establishment of the Federal Government, including a government-owned or controlled corporation, that has the authority to hire employees in the competitive, excepted, and senior executive service.

Examples: Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, Department of the Air Force, Department of Transportation, Small Business Administration.

b. Area of Consideration. The area in which a search is made for eligible candidates to fill a specific position.

c. Change to Lower Grade (also called demotion). A change of an employee, while continuously employed in the same agency, to a position at a lower grade when both the old and new positions are under the same type pay schedule or to a position with a lower representative rate when the old and the new positions are under different pay schedules.

d. Competitive Service. Includes all civilian positions in the Federal Government that are not specifically excepted from the civil service laws by or pursuant to statute, by the President, or by the Office of Personnel Management, and that are not in the Senior Executive Service (GS-16 or equivalent, and above).

e. Detail. The temporary assignment of an employee to perform different duties for a specified period, with the employee returning to his or her regular duties at the end of the detail. There is no formal position change; officially, an employee on detail continues to occupy the position from which detailed and keeps the same status, grade, and pay rate.

f. Excepted Service. Includes unclassified service, unclassified civil service, or positions outside the competitive service and the Senior Executive Service. Excepted service positions have been excepted from the requirements of the competitive service by law, Executive Order, or Office of Personnel Management regulation.

g. Internal Recruitment Notice (IRN). The notice which announces merit promotion opportunities to the workforce.

h. Merit Promotion Plan. The system under which an employee is considered for a position on the basis of personal merit.

i. Position Change. A promotion, demotion, or reassignment made during an employee's continuous service within the same agency. When the move establishes eligibility for grade retention, or when an employee who is already entitled to grade retention moves to another position at or below his or her retained grade, the action is called a "Position Change."

j. Promotion. The change of an employee to a position at a higher grade level within the same pay schedule or to a position with a higher representative rate when the old and new positions are under different pay schedules.

k. Promotion Violations (Procedural, Regulatory, Program):

(1) Procedural. A violation which occurs when a promotion action does not conform to the requirements of the Merit Promotion and Placement Plan. Example:

(a) Failure to consider an employee entitled to consideration.

(b) Selection from a competitive referral listing of an employee who is not in the best qualified group.

(2) Regulatory. A violation which occurs when the promoted employee did not meet legal requirements or Office of Personnel Management regulatory requirements at the time of promotion. Example:

(a) Failure to meet time-in-grade requirements.

(b) Failure to meet Office of Personnel Management qualification requirements.

(3) Program. A violation which occurs when agency promotion guidelines do not conform to Office of Personnel Management requirements or agency promotion plans do not conform to agency guidelines. Example:

(a) Use of inappropriate evaluation methods.

(b) Establishment of inappropriate minimum areas of consideration.

(c) Failure to consult employees and employee organizations, when required.

l. Reassignment. The change of an employee from one position to another without promotion or change to lower grade.

m. Relative. For these purposes, the father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother or half sister.

n. Representative Rate. The second rate on a five-rate regular wage schedule (WG, WL, WS); the fourth rate on the General Schedule (GS); or the established rate on a single rate schedule. Representative rates are used to determine grade level comparisons between pay schedules. When the old and new positions are under different pay schedules (e.g., WG to GS; WS to GS), representative rates are compared to determine if an action is a promotion or change to lower grade; the actual rate of basic pay is not a factor in this determination.

o. Supplemental Qualifications Statement (SQS). The employee application form specifically developed for the expedited recruitment process in lieu of resumes or other application forms.

p. Time-Limited Promotion. The time-limited official change of an employee to a position at a higher grade level within the same pay schedule or to a position with a higher representative rate when the old and new positions are under different pay schedules. This action temporarily increases an employee's grade and pay rate.

1-6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. Employees. Employees are expected to cooperate in the administration of this regulation as follows:

(1) Apply for positions in which they are interested and for which they feel they are qualified, fully complete the Supplemental Qualifications Statement (SQS), and ensure receipt by Directorate of Civilian Personnel not later than the closing date specified on the placement announcement. If the supervisor is absent (temporary duty travel, sick leave, etc.) a note to that effect should be affixed to the timely submitted request. The personnelist will obtain supervisory input.

(2) Actively pursue a program of self-development in preparation for promotion, including on-the-job training opportunities.

(3) Prior to departure on leave or other extended absence, requesting, in writing, that their supervisor submit, on their behalf, an SQS for any placement opportunity that may be

announced during such absence. The employee's request must specifically identify the position title, grade, and, if desired, organizational location of the position for which consideration is requested. An employee who will be temporarily absent (e.g., on leave, at a training course, TDY, temporarily on military leave) is responsible for providing written information to his/her immediate supervisor as to series and grades of vacancies for which he/she would be interested in applying. In such cases, the supervisor will complete and submit Supervisory Input on the SQS, and the personnelist will obtain the employee's Applicant Data.

(4) Serve as technical subject matter experts when required.

(5) Provide a written request to the DCP for an explanation of their qualifications rating, if desired.

(6) Update Official Personnel Folder (OPF).

(a) Submit updating information prior to the closing/cutoff date and not submitted with the SQS. Information received after the closing/cutoff date will not be considered for that specific announcement.

(b) Information concerning the employee's present position must be certified by the employee's current supervisor.

(c) Document schooling beyond high by completion of OPM Form 1170/17, List of College Courses and Certificate of Scholastic Achievement, a signed memorandum indicating the school and dates attended, hours earned for each subject and grade in each subject, or by a transcript from the school. Documentation must be verified before credit is allowed in qualifications determination.

b. Supervisors. Supervisors are expected to participate in the administration of this regulation as follows:

(1) Be knowledgeable of the provisions of this regulation.

(2) Complete the supervisor's part of the SQS.

(3) Consider all candidates referred equally and consistently. Make and document selections promptly based on merit factors.

(4) Provide advice and assistance to employees concerning self-development and advancement opportunities.

(5) Provide the DCP, through the appropriate director, advance information on projected staffing requirements, anticipated losses, changes in duties, or other appropriate information.

(6) Provide job related tasks, for position vacancies under their supervision, for submission with the recruitment request (Standard Form (SF) 52, Request for Personnel Action).

(7) Submit SQS on behalf of an employee absent due to leave or other extended absence - when so requested, in writing, prior to the employee's departure - or notify the absent employee as vacancies are announced so that he/she may apply within the time limits, whichever is more feasible. When the supervisor completes and submits the SQS on behalf of the employee, the personnelist will obtain the employee's input.

(8) Consider equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, upward mobility, selective placement of individuals with disabilities, and special emphasis programs for possible redesign of the vacant position to provide equitable opportunities and to eliminate under-representation of protected minority groups.

(9) Ensure all IRNs and SQSs received are posted on official bulletin boards.

(10) Ensure copies of appropriate SQSs are available for all employees interested in applying. These are job specific; therefore, the appropriate SQS is the one attached to the IRN.

(11) Certify, to the extent possible, the accuracy of additional information submitted by employees concerning their present job. In the case of technical information for which the supervisor is not knowledgeable, the supervisor may indicate such on the additional document.

(12) Select at least three referred candidates, if possible, annotated in priority order, in the event selectee qualifications are not verifiable prior to a commitment.

(13) Refrain from notifying any candidate that he/she has been selected or nonselected for a position, or anyone other than a management official involved in the processing of the referral, prior to official notification by the DCP.

(14) Answer all inquiries from candidates referred, but not selected, as to reason for their nonselection and what they can do to improve possibilities for selection.

c. Directorate of Civilian Personnel (DCP). The DCP is responsible for implementation of this regulation as follows:

(1) Administer the Merit Promotion and Placement Plan in compliance with all regulatory requirements, equitably, and without discrimination.

(2) Maintain promotion and placement records with sufficient documentation to provide a clear audit trail and permit complete reconstruction of any promotion or placement action.

(3) Provide technical guidance and assistance to managers, supervisors, and employees concerning this regulation.

(4) Provide technical assistance to supervisors or others who may be designated in the development of task lists.

(5) Provide information and counseling to employees/applicants on the basic principles of the Merit Promotion and Placement Plan.

(6) Provide employees and applicants written notification concerning the consideration they received, if any, or other appropriate notification about positions for which they applied.

(7) Provide, upon written request, explanation to candidates rated "not qualified" or to candidates not referred.

d. Equal Opportunity Programs Office (EOPO). The EOPO is responsible as follows:

(1) Participate with the DCP in evaluating the effectiveness of the Merit Promotion and Placement Plan in accomplishing affirmative action.

(2) Assist in locating and identifying sources of minority and female candidates.

CHAPTER 2

EXCLUSIONS

2-1. EXCLUSIONS FROM MERIT PROMOTION AND PLACEMENT. Certain OPM, Department of Defense (DOD), and DA programs/actions have a definite relationship to this regulation and may take precedence in filling new or vacant positions. The following are excluded from the Merit Promotion and Placement Plan:

a. Priority Placement Program. All positions at Fort Polk are subject to the Automated STOPPER unless a specific exemption has been granted. Placement of DOD employees under the mandatory provisions of the Department of Defense Priority Placement Program is excluded from Merit Promotion.

b. Reduction-in-Force (RIF). Placement of employees within the workforce who have been, or are scheduled to be, declared surplus, or placement actions in connection with reduction-in-force.

c. Placement Actions Required by Higher Authority. Placement actions of individuals having statutory, regulatory, or administrative placement rights, e.g., return from military service, return from overseas tour of duty, or return from intergovernmental assignment.

d. Correction Directed by Higher Authority. Office of Personnel Management or higher authority directed action to correct a violation of law, policy, or regulation.

e. Grievance/Appellate Decisions. Placement actions as a result of a negotiated grievance decision or administrative procedures, appellate decisions or Equal Employment Opportunity decisions, or settlement agreements which have the approval of the appropriate local official.

f. Career Programs. Consideration of employees for career program positions filled at mandatory referral levels under command/DA/DOD-wide referral levels. Also, placement of graduating career interns under the provisions of the career programs.

g. Term and Temporary Appointments.

2-2. OTHER EXCLUSIONS. There may be other specific exclusions authorized by the Office of Personnel Management, or higher authority within Department of Defense or Department of the Army, which may take precedence in filling new or vacant positions.

CHAPTER 3

EXCEPTIONS TO COMPETITIVE PROCEDURES

3-1. NONCOMPETITIVE ACTIONS. The following types of placement actions are authorized exceptions to the competitive procedures of this plan. The use of these provisions will be documented in the placement package for the personnel action effected.

a. Remedy Based on EEO Complaint. Candidates given remedy under 29 CFR 1613.271 (EEO complaints) are referred before consideration is given to other candidates. The selecting official is required to provide written reasons for any nonselections under this type of referral.

b. Automatic Repromotion/Position Change.

(1) Employees who are receiving grade retention benefits due to involuntary placement in a lower graded position (for reasons such as RIF, correction of classification error, or declination of functional transfer) will be entitled to automatic repromotion/position change for any position, up to the retained grade, provided conditions are met as follows:

(a) They are fully qualified and available for the position as determined by the DCP.

(b) They have at least a "Successful Level 3" current annual performance appraisal. In the absence of a current performance appraisal, the employee is considered to have an assumed "Successful Level 3" rating.

(c) The position is located in the same competitive area from which demoted.

(d) The position is in the same pay group (e.g., GS, WG, WL, WS) of the retained grade.

(e) The position is in the same occupational series from which demoted, or is a position and grade that the employee previously held on a nontemporary basis in a different occupational series in the same pay group of the retained grade.

(f) For supervisory positions, the employee must have served satisfactorily in a supervisory position in Federal service for at least 1 year.

(g) The position must have the same work schedule as the employee held immediately prior to the involuntary reduction in grade.

(h) The position must not have known promotion potential to a grade above that from which demoted.

(2) If two or more employees are entitled to automatic repromotion/position change to the same position, the selecting official will be given a referral and selection register for mandatory selection from among those referred.

(3) Automatic repromotion/position change will cease when the employee is no longer entitled to grade retention.

(4) Declination of a valid offer at an intervening grade will terminate the employee's entitlement to repromotion/position change at that grade level and lower grade levels, but the employee will continue to receive automatic repromotion/position change for higher grades, up to and including that from which downgraded.

(5) Declination of a valid offer at the retained grade will terminate grade and pay retention benefits and all repromotion entitlements.

(6) Declination of a time-limited promotion will not terminate the employee's entitlement to repromotion/position change at that and lower grade levels, unless the position is being recruited on a time-limited basis "which may lead to permanent promotion."

(7) An employee who fails to receive automatic repromotion through administrative oversight will be entitled to 2 years eligibility for automatic repromotion, beginning with the effective date of the personnel action from which automatic repromotion was lost.

(8) Automatic repromotion/position change will be made before special consideration for repromotion/position change.

c. Special Consideration for Repromotion or Position Change.

(1) Employees who are receiving grade or pay retention benefits due to involuntary placement in a lower-graded position (for reasons such as RIF, correction of classification error, return from overseas, or declination of functional transfer) will be entitled to special consideration for repromotion/position change to positions having the same work schedule as the position held immediately prior to the involuntary reduction in grade.

(2) Employees receiving pay retention benefits due to involuntary placement in a lower-graded position due to ill

health will be entitled to special consideration for repromotion upon receipt of medical evidence of physical qualifications.

(3) Special consideration for repromotion or position change will be extended to individuals for positions at or below the grade from which demoted. If the position/grade from which demoted was GS, consideration will be extended to GS positions for which qualified. If the position/grade from which demoted was in the FWS, consideration will be extended to all FWS pay groups for which qualified (e.g., WG, WL, WS).

(4) Special consideration will cease when the employee is no longer entitled to grade or pay retention benefits.

(5) Declination of a valid offer at an intervening grade will terminate the employee's entitlement to repromotion/position change consideration at that and lower grade levels.

(6) Declination of a valid offer at the retained grade will terminate grade and pay retention benefits and all repromotion entitlements.

(7) Declination of a time-limited promotion will not terminate the employee's entitlement to repromotion/position change at that and lower grade levels, unless the position is being recruited on a time-limited basis "which may lead to permanent promotion."

(8) Special consideration does not extend to positions which have known promotion potential to a grade above that from which demoted.

(9) Special consideration for repromotion will not be granted to employees who have been demoted to correct a procedural, regulatory, or program violation, or to employees who accepted a demotion to enter a training program and then did not complete the training, regardless of any entitlement to pay retention.

(10) Selection from a referral of those entitled to special consideration for repromotion/position change is not mandatory.

d. Priority Consideration.

(1) A finding that a candidate failed to receive proper consideration for a promotion is appropriate only when that applicant's name should have been referred to the selecting official, but was not.

(2) A candidate not given proper consideration in a competitive promotion action is afforded priority consideration for the next appropriate vacancy. The next appropriate vacancy is a position identical to the position from which consideration was lost (i.e., same title, pay plan, series, grade, and ranking criteria). If selected, the candidate may be promoted noncompetitively.

(3) Candidates entitled to priority consideration will be given a bona fide consideration for the position before consideration is given to candidates under competitive procedures. This exception is limited to one consideration for each consideration lost.

e. Promotion to Grade Previously Held. Promotion to a grade previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (or in another merit system with which OPM has an interchange agreement, including Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentality (NAFIs) and Civilian Intelligence Personnel Management System (CIPMS)) from which an employee was separated or demoted for other than performance or conduct reasons.

f. Assignment (or Detail) to Position - Promotion Potential No Higher Than Current (Previously Held). Promotion, position change, reassignment, change to lower grade, transfer, reinstatement or detail to a position having promotion potential no greater than the potential of the position an employee currently holds or previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (or in another merit system with which OPM has an interchange agreement approved under Rule 6.7; including Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentality and Civilian Intelligence Personnel Management System) and did not lose because of performance or conduct reasons. Employee (or applicant) must provide verification of having previously held a career ladder position and its target grade prior to noncompetitive consideration under this paragraph.

g. Career Ladder Promotion.

(1) A career ladder promotion without competition when an employee was previously selected from a civil service register, by direct hire, by noncompetitive appointment or conversion, or under competitive promotion procedures for an assignment intended to prepare the employee for the position being filled, and provided the promotion potential was made known to all potential candidates.

(2) Each career promotion to a successive higher grade level, to include career ladder promotions following the

noncompetitive conversion of a cooperative education or a Federal Junior Fellowship employee, will be made only after the conditions are met as follows:

(a). Verification that the incumbents meets legal, regulatory, and minimum qualification requirements for the higher level.

(b) Management certifies that higher level duties are required.

(c) The employee's current performance rating of record is "Successful Level 3" or higher.

(d) The incumbent is satisfactorily performing higher level duties.

(e) Management recommends promotion.

(f) If applicable, that the required training has been successfully completed.

(3) An employee occupying a trainee position is not guaranteed a promotion. If the employee cannot achieve the level of qualifications needed for performance at the higher level, or if the employee should ask to be reassigned, other appropriate assignment action will be initiated.

h. Promotion Based on Additional Duties and Responsibilities. A promotion resulting from the addition of duties and responsibilities may be made noncompetitively ONLY when ALL of the following conditions have been met:

(1) There are no other employees at the same grade in the unit supervised by the selecting official who are performing duties substantially the same as those performed by the employee before the addition of the new duties and responsibilities.

(2) The employee continues to perform the same basic functions as those in the former position, and the duties of the former position are in the new position.

(3) The addition of the duties and responsibilities does not adversely affect another employee's position, such as job abolishment or reduction in known promotion potential.

(4) The employee meets all eligibility requirements for the position.

i. Promotion Due to Upgrading. A promotion resulting from the upgrading of a position as a result of position review or the correction of an initial classification error.

j. A Position Change Permitted by Reduction-in-Force Regulations.

k. Time-Limited Promotion for 120 Days or Less. A temporary promotion to a higher grade or to a position with known promotion potential for 120 days or less (see Appendix A).

l. Detail to Higher Grade for 120 Days or Less. A detail to a higher grade or to a position with known promotion potential for 120 days or less. Negotiated Agreements may govern time limitations on assignment to a higher graded bargaining unit position (see Appendix A).

m. Detail to Unclassified Duties. A detail to unclassified sets of duties may be made (and extended) in increments of no more than 120 calendar days up to 1 year (2 years if the organization is undergoing Commercial Activities Study).

n. Conversion of 30% or More Disabled Veteran. Conversion under 5 Code of Federal Regulations 315.707 to career or career-conditional appointment of eligible 30% or more disabled veteran serving on temporary or provisional appointment.

o. Conversion of Excepted Service Appointments. Conversion to career or career-conditional appointment of employee serving under excepted service appointment e.g., Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA), individuals with disabilities, student employment, or other qualifying appointments.

p. Entry Level Positions. Merit promotion procedures will not be required for entry level positions (GS-02/WG-02 and GS-03/WG-03) when, based on past or recent recruiting efforts, it is determined qualified candidates are not likely to be available within the minimum area of consideration. Rationale will be documented in the placement package.

3-2. OTHER NONCOMPETITIVE ACTIONS. There may be other noncompetitive actions authorized by the OPM or higher headquarters within DOD which are not addressed herein. The use of these, if any, will be specifically documented in the placement package for the personnel action effected.

CHAPTER 4

MERIT PROMOTION COMPETITION

4-1. COMPETITIVE ACTIONS. Unless an exception to competitive procedures is provided elsewhere in this regulation, competitive procedures apply to the following types of actions. Competition is also required for placement in positions at the same grade as (or with known promotion potential to the same grade as) a position from which an employee (or former employee) was separated or demoted in the competitive service for performance or "for cause" reasons.

a. All promotions and actions which may subsequently lead to promotion.

b. Reassignment or change to lower grade to a position with more promotion potential than a position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (except as permitted by reduction-in-force regulations).

c. Reinstatement to a permanent or temporary position at a higher grade or with more promotion potential than a position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.

d. Transfer to a position at a higher grade or with more promotion potential than a position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (includes appointment from another merit system with which the OPM has an interchange agreement approved under Rule 6.7; including Non-Appropriated Funds Instrumentality (NAFI) & Civilian Intelligence Personnel Management System(CIPMS)).

e. Time-limited promotions for more than 120 days to higher graded positions; prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive time-limited promotions and noncompetitive details to higher graded positions counts toward the 120-day total. A time limited promotion may be made permanent without further competition provided the promotion was originally made under competitive procedures and the fact that it might lead to a permanent promotion was made known to all potential candidates (see Appendix A).

f. Details for more than 120 days to a higher grade position or to a position with higher promotion potential; prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive details to higher graded positions and noncompetitive time-limited promotions counts toward the 120-day total (see Appendix A).

g. Selection for training which is part of an authorized training agreement, part of a promotion program, or required before an employee may be considered for a promotion.

h. Military spouse preference registrants in compliance with the DOD PPP. When competitive procedures are used, only military spouse preference registrants who are in the best qualified group will be referred. When a spouse is referred, and selection is made from a competitive referral list, a military spouse preference registrant must be selected. In such cases, internal promotable candidates may NOT be selected.

4-2. AREA OF CONSIDERATION. The area of consideration is the area in which the search is made for candidates to fill vacant positions. The area should be as broad as practicable to meet the employing activity's needs, to contribute fresh ideas and new viewpoints, to afford employees adequate opportunities for advancement, and to meet targeted underrepresented occupations or grade levels. The area of consideration will normally include current permanent DA employees in the competitive service.

a. Excepted Service Employees. Department of the Army employees serving in competitive service positions on an excepted appointment (e.g., employees appointed on VRA, employees appointed under "persons with disabilities" authority, CIPMS employees eligible to apply under the OPM Interchange Agreement) may apply for positions in which they are interested and will be considered as permitted by the authority of their appointment.

b. Term Employees. Term employees may be promoted, demoted, or reassigned to another position which has been authorized to be filled by term appointment. Term employees may apply to IRNs only when the area of consideration specifies that "term" employees may apply.

c. Limited Areas of Consideration. The area of consideration may be restricted due to various reasons (e.g., for details, for time-limited promotions, due to budgetary constraints, manpower limitations), but may not be limited to less than the directorate level (or comparable organizational entity).

d. Expanded Area of Consideration.

(1) The employer reserves the right to expand the area of consideration before, during, or after the IRN search for candidates and to any appropriate source. Expanded sources may include transfer eligibles, NAFI employees eligible to apply under the OPM Interchange Agreement, reinstatement eligibles, former overseas family member eligibles under Executive Order 12721, VRA, 30% or more disabled veterans.

(2) Recruitment may be extended to the OPM for issuance of a certificate of eligibles. In the absence of sufficient eligibles, the OPM may allow recruitment under Delegated Examining Authority where all United States citizens may apply. Recruitment to or through the OPM sources may involve expenses which must be approved prior to recruitment.

(3) When recruitment in the announced area of consideration has produced at least one high-quality, qualified candidate who is acceptable to the selecting official, expansion of the area is not mandatory.

e. Family Members. Family member eligibles may contain a pool of high quality or well qualified candidates. The search for candidates will include consideration of the appointing authorities under which family members may apply. Family members who are current permanent DA competitive service employees or PPP registrants under the DOD PPP are normally in the area of consideration for all positions for which recruitment is executed. The exception is when there are budgetary constraints and hire freezes or when other appropriate reasons prevail.

f. EEO Consideration. Equal Employment Program goals for targeted underrepresented occupations will be considered in establishing areas of consideration.

4-3. INTERNAL RECRUITMENT NOTICES.

a. Internal Recruitment Notices are used to locate candidates for merit promotion competition for positions covered by the Merit Promotion and Placement Plan. This is the means through which current permanent Army employees of Fort Polk serviced by the DCP apply for other positions. Application procedures will be fully described in the recruitment notice. Recruitment notices will be open for acceptance of employee application forms and/or SQSS, for a minimum of 10 calendar days.

b. "Open continuous" IRNs may be used when there is a recurrent need to fill certain positions having the same qualification requirements and rating factors. Employees may file SQSS at any time that open continuous IRNs remain in effect. The first cut-off for rating will be no less than 10 calendar days after the opening date of the announcement. Subsequent cutoff dates are established on the date of receipt of a subsequent recruitment request (SF 52) in the DCP. Candidates applying to open continuous IRNs will be rated as needed, when vacancies occur.

c. Internal Recruitment Notices will normally consist of two segments:

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(1) The Recruitment Notice. This includes the basic information about the position (position title; series; grade); IRN number; opening date; closing date; location; qualification requirements; duties; time-in-grade, if applicable; who may apply; how to apply; where to apply; and any special notes (e.g., working conditions).

(2) The Employee Application Form. This is the SQS which has been designed specifically for the position identified in the recruitment notice. The SQS contains three parts, which are self-explanatory. Parts I and II are completed by the applicant. Part I contains self-rating of basic eligibility, relevant education and/or experience, time-in-grade, if applicable; and other certifications, if appropriate. Part II consists of the tasks relevant to the particular position, and applicant performance appraisal/awards data. Part III is completed by the supervisor.

4-4. LIMITATION ON EMPLOYEE MOVES.

a. When an employee has been selected for and accepted a position by promotion, reassignment, or change to a lower grade, that employee will be removed from consideration for all other positions unless the other position would result in a subsequent promotion to a higher grade than the position accepted or to a position with higher known promotion potential.

b. After any position move (promotion, reassignment, position change, or change to a lower grade) based on employee request, the employee will not receive consideration for another voluntary position move, other than to a position with higher known promotion potential, for a period of 180 days. This provision applies only when the position move was voluntarily requested by a Fort Polk employee to another position at Fort Polk. An exception may be made for management reasons, i.e., a management directed reassignment.

CHAPTER 5

POLK EXPEDITED RECRUITMENT PROCESS (PERP)

5-1. CONCEPT. The Polk Expedited Recruitment Process (PERP) simplifies the application process, expedites the rating, expedites the referral process, and provides a method of referring quality candidates for selection.

5-2. APPLICATION PROCESS. The SQS is the employee application form. The form contains information for basic qualifications determinations, tasks specifically related to the position, performance appraisal data, related awards and training, relevant experience, supervisory input, etc. Completion of this form allows the employee to self-rate his/her level of experience, education, and/or training for each task.

5-3. RATING PROCESS.

a. Self-Rating - All Applicants. Applicants complete the applicant data, and Part I of the SQS, and obtain Supervisory Input in Part III. Part I is self-rating of basic eligibility. The self-ratings are not validated against the official personnel folder (or application) until and/or unless the applicant is selected. This saves substantial resources in both processing time and in the time required to create crediting plans, pull official personnel folders, ranking each applicant, etc. The SQS advises applicants of the requirement for subsequent validation of qualifications, if selected.

b. Competitive Applicants. Applicants applying for a position which has a higher grade, or higher target grade, than they currently hold, or previously held, on a non-temporary basis in the competitive service, must complete Part II of the SQS.

c. Noncompetitive Applicants. Applicants who are eligible for noncompetitive consideration will not be assigned a competitive score or ranked and, therefore, do not have to complete Part II of the SQS. These candidates, if basically qualified based on response in Part I, are referable to the selecting official.

5-4. REFERRAL.

a. The Referral and Selection Register (DA Form 2600) will normally be used to refer candidates to selecting officials. Each referral with more than one candidate will contain a statistical summary of minority group and sex data.

b. Noncompetitive Referrals. The noncompetitive referral includes candidates who are not required to compete for assignment to the position. This includes candidates under exceptions to competitive procedures outlined in Chapter 3.

c. Competitive Referrals. Competitive applicants who score an average of 3 or higher on all tasks are referred. When needed, best qualified candidates may be determined by a range, or cutoff, method which will be identified in the placement package. If there are 10 or fewer competitive applicants, then 2.5 becomes the referral point level, not 3 points. If no candidates score an average of 2.5 or higher, then candidates who score an average of at least 2 points on each task may be referred. Any lower scores are not high quality and candidates with these scores will not be referred.

d. OPM Certificates. Office of Personnel Management certificate of eligible candidates are competitive candidates; however, these candidates are obtained under OPM guidelines - not covered by local merit promotion. Candidates on certificates of eligibles will be referred separately from inservice referrals.

e. Competitive and noncompetitive referrals may be issued simultaneously to selecting officials and selection may be made from either referral.

f. Re-Use of the Referral Lists. Referral lists may be re-issued to fill any subsequent vacancy with the same title, series, grade and identical task lists (or knowledge, skills, and abilities/job elements), in any activity, within 120 days after the closing date of the announcement.

5-5. SELECTION PROCEDURES.

a. The selecting official is entitled to select or nonselect from among the candidates referred in accordance with any specific instructions on the referral, if applicable. The selection must be based on one or more merit factors necessary for successful performance in the position.

b. When the vacant position is identified in an approved Affirmative Action Plan or a Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program Plan, as one in a series and grade in an under-represented category, then race, sex, or national origin may be considered as one factor in the selection process, but not the sole or deciding factor. Any consideration of race, sex, or national origin must be a part of the selecting official's total evaluation process and not be a tie breaker or points add-on.

When the condition of under-representation is corrected, race, sex, or ethnic-conscious selection will cease.

c. Record review and interview of applicants is at the discretion of the selecting official.

d. Selecting officials will not give written, performance, or job knowledge tests to assist in making their selection since job related tests must be included in the candidate evaluation process. Selecting officials may seek the advice or recommendation of their subordinate supervisors, higher level supervisors, other employees at or above the level of the position being filled, or other individuals who are knowledgeable of the individual's qualifications.

e. All referral and selection registers referred must be completed by the selecting supervisor to show action taken regarding either selection, nonselection or alternate selection, and selection priority, signature, and date. The completed referrals should be returned, through supervisory channels, and the EOPO, to the DCP no later than the due date, normally 7 workdays following issuance. The official making the review will assure and certify compliance with the merit principles and procedures, including EEO considerations.

(1) Selection. Selection is made on the referral list containing the selectee's name. The selectee's name, the merit factors for selection (training, education, experience, appraisals, or other merit factors related to the position), and the reasons for expecting the selectee to perform successfully in the position (Ms. Smith's training, education, and experience in the field of office automation makes her the superior candidate to perform in this position) must be completed. Statements such as "Best Qualified", "Best Suited", are not acceptable. Document alternate selections as John Brown-1st alternate, Suzie Que-2d alternate, etc.

(2) Nonselection. On the referrals where no one is selected, enter "nonselect".

f. Management may decide not to fill a vacancy even after receiving a properly developed DA Form 2600. If the decision is made to not fill a position after receiving a "full" (three to five available candidates) selection register, the register will be returned to the DCP with written justification signed by the director/office/activity chief. The DCP will review the documentation and determine if the decision to not make a selection is supportable on merit grounds. If it does not appear supportable, the DCP will elevate the matter to the appropriate level for concurrence (e.g., the Garrison Commander or MEDCOM

Commander). Approval of the decision not to fill a vacancy will result in the SF 52 being returned to the originating activity subject to DOD PPP clearance. In no instance will selection be deferred or delayed solely to circumvent the requirements of this plan and/or the Federal Merit System.

5-6. VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS. Upon receipt of the referral list showing selection, the personnelist pulls the official personnel folder (or application) of the selectee and validates qualifications prior to commitment. If qualifications cannot be validated, the second selectee's record is pulled for verification, etc.

5-7. NOTIFYING SELECTED CANDIDATES. Selecting officials, including anyone responsible for the administrative processing of referrals, will not notify any candidate that he or she has been selected or nonselected for a position. A final procedural and regulatory review must be accomplished by the DCP prior to selectee notification. Any known violation of this policy will subject the individual to appropriate corrective action.

5-8. RELEASE OF SELECTED EMPLOYEE. When selections will result in relocation of the candidates within or between organizations covered by this Plan, arrangements for a release date will be made by the DCP in coordination with the supervisory officials concerned. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, when official notification of selection is made during the first week of a pay period, the employee will be released at the end of the pay period, and, when official notification is made during the second week of a pay period, the employee will be released at the end of the following pay period. Any proposed deviations from this practice will be promptly coordinated and agreed upon between the supervisors involved. In all cases, the release of an employee of this installation will be accomplished no later than the beginning of the third pay period after notification to selectee.

CHAPTER 6

EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

6-1. GENERAL. Although not required, employees should attempt to resolve any questions or concerns about a specific promotion action through their immediate supervisor. A member of the DCP staff will be available to answer questions or complaints regarding specific placement actions. When surfaced informally, every effort will be made to resolve questions or complaints on an informal basis.

6-2. APPEALS. There is no right of appeal to the OPM, but the OPM may conduct investigations of any substantial violations of the Office of Personnel Management requirements.

6-3. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES. Employees have the right to file a complaint relating to a promotion action.

a. Army Grievance System. If an issue cannot be resolved informally, employees occupying positions excluded from recognized bargaining units may file a complaint under the Army Grievance System. For further information and assistance in filing a complaint, employees should contact their immediate supervisor and/or the DCP, Labor/Management-Employee Relations and Training (L/MERT) Division.

b. Negotiated Grievance Procedures. If an issue is not resolved informally, employees occupying positions included in recognized bargaining units may file a complaint under the applicable negotiated grievance procedure. Employees desiring representation when filing a grievance may be represented by the Union. Information concerning grievance processing may be obtained from the immediate supervisor, a union representative, and/or the DCP, L/MERT Division.

6-4. NON-GRIEVABLE ISSUES. Any matter involving nonselection for promotion from a group of properly ranked and certified candidates is not grievable. This does not prohibit an employee from grieving the failure to receive proper consideration.

6-5. EEO DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS. If an employee or an applicant feels he/she has been discriminated against in a placement action processed under the provisions of this Plan, he/she may contact the Equal Opportunity Programs Office for information on the use of these procedures.

6-6. TIME LIMITS. Time limits for filing complaints under the above described procedures vary. Consequently, employees should be mindful of them in pursuing their grievance or complaint.

CHAPTER 7

PLACEMENT RECORDS/REVIEWS/CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

7-1. PLACEMENT RECORDS. A placement record will be maintained by the DCP for each position filled. The record will contain written documentation of the actions taken in the process of filling a position, including the decisions, rationale, and judgements. Sufficient documentation will be available within the personnel files to provide a clear audit trail and permit a complete reconstruction of any promotion or placement action. Placement record files are for temporary retention and will be maintained only for the appropriate retention period designated by higher authority.

7-2. REVIEWS.

a. Each placement action will be reviewed by the processing personnel specialist/assistant to assure that the record is consistent with the provisions of this regulation and to ensure documentation of the audit trail for the promotion or placement action.

b. The Director of Civilian Personnel and the Equal Employment Manager may review samples of completed placement actions to ensure that promotions and placements are based on merit factors. They will ensure that placement actions provide all candidates with an equal opportunity for employment and advancement.

c. Placement records will be subject to review by internal evaluation methods and by higher authority, including the OPM, DA, and the DOD.

7-3. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS. When violations are identified as a result of any review of placement actions, appropriate corrective action will be taken.

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The proponent agency of this regulation is the Directorate of Civilian Personnel. Users are invited to send comments to Commander, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, ATTN: AFZX-CP-CS, Fort Polk, Louisiana 71459-6650.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:
MICHAEL V. CHURCH
Colonel, GS
Deputy Commander


PAUL JACKSON
Director, Information Management

APPENDIXES:
A-Time-Limited Promotions
B-Details
C-Employee Reassignments/Voluntary
Changes to Lower Grade and
Management Initiated/
Directed Reassignments
D-Order of Considerations

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APPENDIX A

TIME-LIMITED PROMOTIONS

A-1. TIME-LIMITED PROMOTIONS. Except when the service is for a brief period (30 days or less), a time-limited promotion is generally the most appropriate means of meeting a situation requiring the temporary services of an employee in a higher graded position. Appointing an employee to an established position not only gives better recognition to management's needs and the employee's new responsibilities, but also compensates the employee more adequately for the higher grade (or paid) work he or she is performing.

A-2. GENERAL.

a. A time-limited promotion may be used as follows:

(1) when an employee has to perform the duties of a position during the extended absence of the incumbent;

(2) to fill a position which has become vacant until a permanent appointment is made;

(3) to fill positions temporarily pending reorganization or downsizing;

(4) to assume responsibility for an increased workload for a limited period;

(5) to participate in a special project which will last for a limited period;

(6) pending receipt of a mandatory career referral list;
or

(7) any other legitimate management reason.

b. A time-limited promotion is not appropriate; however, if primarily for training or evaluating an employee in a higher grade position. It may not be used to give an employee a trial period before permanent promotion, or to decide among candidates for permanent promotion.

c. A time-limited promotion of less than 30 days will not normally be allowed.

d. An employee must receive advance written notice:

(1) of the conditions of the time-limited promotion;

(2) the time limit of the promotion and the reason for a time limit;

(3) of the requirement for competition for promotion beyond 120 days, where applicable;

(4) that the employee may be returned at any time to the position from which temporarily promoted, or to a different position of equivalent grade and pay; and

(5) the return is not subject to the procedures in 5 CFR Parts 351-Reduction In Force, 432-Performance Based Reductions In Grade and Removal Actions, 752-Adverse Actions, or 771-Agency Administrative Grievance System. When an employee is promoted under a nondiscretionary provision and is unable to get an advance notice, the written notice must be provided as soon as possible after the promotion is made.

e. A time-limited promotion is for a specified period of time; however, management may terminate the promotion at any time sooner than the expected termination date.

A-3. DURATION. Time-limited promotions may be made for a specified period of time, not to exceed 5 years. The 5-year limit applies to the total continuous time an employee is temporarily promoted without new competition. If an employee is promoted temporarily and later competes and is selected for a second temporary promotion (either at the same or a higher grade), the 5-year period starts running anew with the second temporary promotion. Also, if an employee is noncompetitively promoted for 120 days, and the promotion is extended after competition has been held, the first 120 days counts towards the 5-year limit.

A-4. EXTENSION OF TIME LIMITS. Prior OPM approval is required to extend a time-limited promotion beyond 5 years. If a legitimate need were to exist for extending the promotion beyond 5 years, justification for request for any extension beyond 5 years must be timely submitted to the DCP to obtain the required approval.

A-5. NONCOMPETITIVE ACTIONS. An employee may be promoted for up to 120 days without competition. This allows management to obtain the services of an employee quickly while at the same time assuring that an employee does not gain an undue advantage over other candidates if the position is filled later on a permanent basis. Prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive details to higher graded positions and noncompetitive time-limited promotions counts toward the 120-day total.

A-6. COMPETITIVE TIME-LIMITED PROMOTIONS OVER 120 DAYS. Time-limited promotions to higher grade positions for more than 120 days are subject to merit promotion competition, unless the employee can be noncompetitively promoted on a permanent basis, as addressed in Chapter 3. Prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive time-limited promotions and noncompetitive details to higher graded positions counts toward the 120 day total.

A-7. MAKING THE TIME-LIMITED PROMOTION PERMANENT. A time-limited promotion may be made permanent without further competition provided it was subject to merit promotion competition, the normal minimum area of consideration was used to hold competition, and the fact that the time-limited promotion might lead to a permanent promotion was made known to all potential candidates.

A-8. LIMITATION ON TIME-LIMITED PROMOTION OF TERM EMPLOYEES. A time-limited promotion cannot go beyond the term employee's appointment not to exceed date.

APPENDIX C

EMPLOYEE REASSIGNMENTS/VOLUNTARY CHANGES TO LOWER GRADE
AND
MANAGEMENT INITIATED/DIRECTED REASSIGNMENTS

C-1. APPLICABILITY. This procedure applies to movements within a directorate (office or activity), both to employees who desire reassignment or voluntary change to lower grade to another position within their same employing directorate (office or activity) and to management initiated or directed reassignments. Further, the Garrison Commander can direct the action for any civilian in the Garrison and tenant commanders within their respective commands. The Director of Civilian Personnel may also propose certain management directed reassignments, e.g., in situations where employees are declared surplus in their current positions.

C-2. ENTITLEMENTS. Each employee is entitled to one job, the one he or she currently holds. No employee has a right to a reassignment for personal convenience. Because reassignment introduces inefficiencies in terms of consequent requirements for training and diminished productivity during the learning period, any voluntary change in position assignment is done for the advantage of the organization or the mission. Regulations allow an employee to apply for any position for which he or she is qualified, so there may be cases in which extenuating circumstances may make the personal needs of the employee a controlling factor in approving such a position change. Responsibility for judging the advantage to the organization or mission rests exclusively upon management, and appropriately includes the full range of management concerns.

C-3. EMPLOYEE'S REQUEST FOR REASSIGNMENT OR VOLUNTARY CHANGE TO LOWER GRADE.

a. When an employee feels that he or she could be more effectively utilized in another position within the same directorate/office/activity, the employee may request reassignment (or voluntary change to lower grade) and his/her reasons for the request will be considered by the director/office/activity chief).

b. The request must be submitted in writing through supervisory channels to the director/office/activity chief. It must state the specific position desired and the reasons for the request. In cases of requests for voluntary change to lower grade, the request must also contain a statement that the employee realizes he or she will be subject to a lower rate of basic pay if the request is approved.

c. The director/office/activity chief will give the employee a written response to any request for reassignment or voluntary change to lower grade that is not approved by management. Employee requests for reassignment or change to lower grade which are approved will be forwarded to the DCP, Classification and Staffing Division, along with the SF 52 for recruitment for the vacant position.

C-4. HEALTH AND PERSONAL HARDSHIP MOVES. An employee may request a voluntary reassignment or change to lower grade through his/her supervisory chain for a position move due to health and/or personal hardship. The employee must specifically state the reasons for the request; any moves desired because of health reasons must be accompanied by an attending physician's statement supporting the employee's request. The request may be favorably considered by management officials if there is a vacant position for which the employee qualifies. Management officials may initiate action to move the employee by submitting a SF 52 for the position vacancy, along with the employee's written request and doctor's report, if applicable. This request is submitted to the DCP, L/MERT Division, for further coordination with appropriate management officials.

C-5. INTERNAL RECRUITMENT NOTICE MOVES. Employees desiring consideration for another position may apply to any internal recruitment notice for which they desire consideration, even though management may not have initially approved their request for reassignment or voluntary change to lower grade before the position was announced.

C-6. EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS. The DCP staff must determine employee qualifications and assure that all legal and regulatory requirements have been met prior to effecting the desired reassignment or change to a lower grade.

C-7. LIMITATION ON EMPLOYEE POSITION MOVES.

a. When an employee has been selected for and accepted a position by promotion, reassignment, or change to a lower grade, that employee will be removed from consideration for all other positions unless the other position would result in a subsequent promotion (in a higher grade than the employee has just accepted or in a position with higher known promotion potential).

b. After any position move (promotion, reassignment, position change, or change to a lower grade) based on employee request, the employee will not receive consideration for another voluntary position move, other than to a position with higher known promotion potential, for a period of 180 days. This

provision applies only when the position move was voluntarily requested by a Fort Polk employee to another position at Fort Polk. An exception may be made for management reasons (i.e., management directed reassignment).

C-8. MANAGEMENT INITIATED/DIRECTED REASSIGNMENT. Management may direct the reassignment of any employee in the interest of the organization or mission.

a. If the employee concurs, he/she may indicate concurrence on the reverse of the SF 52 prepared for the reassignment. If the employee accepts the reassignment, the action will be processed, as proposed, subject to all legal and regulatory guidelines. Certain management directed reassignments will be proposed at the Directorate of Civilian Personnel level.

b. If the employee does not concur with the reassignment.

(1) the management official must give the employee written notice indicating the reason for the proposed action, why the employee was selected for the reassignment, and the employee's right to reply.

(2) If the employee still does not accept the reassignment, he/she must state in writing the reasons for any declination.

(3) If the decision is reached to continue the action, the SF 52 for the vacant position, along with correspondence with the employee, will be forwarded to the DCP. The employee's reasons for declination will be fully considered, and the employee will be informed, in writing, of the decision.

(4) If the decision is to continue with the reassignment, and the employee again refuses to accept the reassignment, a notice of separation may be prepared and issued to the employee for failure to accept a reassignment.

APPENDIX D

ORDER OF CONSIDERATIONS

There may be special situational or regulatory exceptions which may change the order.

D-1. Statutory/regulatory/mandatory actions/placements directed by higher authority.

D-2. Reassignment or voluntary change to lower grade of a surplus employee.

D-3. Management directed reassignments subject to clearance of the Department of Defense (DOD) Priority Placement Program (PPP).

D-4. Automatic repromotion or position change to a grade (or intervening grade) from which demoted without personal cause and not at employee's request (certain employees in grade retention).

D-5. Repromotion or position change to a grade (or intervening grade) from which demoted without personal cause and not at employee's request (employees in grade and/or pay retention).

D-6. Employee entitled to noncompetitive priority consideration as corrective action for failure to be given proper consideration under this Plan.

D-7. Employee who has been found by appropriate medical authority to be medically disqualified to perform the full range of duties of his/her current position.

D-8. Reemployment Priority List (RPL) registrant in accordance with DOD PPP.

D-9. Certain other reassignments/placements permitted by the DOD PPP.

D-10. Priority 1 and 2 registrants in accordance with the DOD PPP.

D-11. Reassignment or change to lower grade in accordance with Appendix C of this Plan.

D-12. Appointment of individuals with disabilities subject to clearance of DOD PPP.

D-13. Internal recruitment candidates and military spouse preference registrants in accordance with the DOD PPP.

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D-14. Priority 3 registrants in accordance with the DOD PPP.

D-15. Other recruitment in accordance with the DOD PPP.